

Greater Sage-Grouse

Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for Ranch Management

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Next Month's Issue

Conservation Measures Continued
Compliance & Biological Monitoring
Who's Responsible for What?

CCAA/CCA Webpage

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Ecological Services Office located in Cheyenne, Wyoming, developed a webpage to provide general information about Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA) and Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA). Also located on the webpage are the previous month's issues of the Greater Sage-Grouse Umbrella CCA for Wyoming Ranch Management.

<http://www.fws.gov/wyominges/>

Ranchland CCAA Conservation Measures Listed and Explained

The Greater Sage-Grouse Umbrella CCAA for Ranch Management is designed to address identified threats affecting sage-grouse on private lands in Wyoming, while providing conservation measure (CM) options to address each threat. Ranchers are only required to address the threats identified on their property, and within their control, by incorporating the appropriate CM for the property they wish to cover under a CCAA. Outside funding sources may

be available to incorporate CMs when necessary. The Service recognizes each property is unique and the CMs are site-dependent. As mentioned in the March 2011 flier, all CCAA participants must "Maintain contiguous habitat by avoiding fragmentation (e.g. do not subdivide property, consider conservation easements)." Continued on back



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How Does A Rancher Work with BLM on Federal Grazing Permits?

As a companion to the umbrella CCAA, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will implement a Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA) at the statewide level administered through the Wyoming BLM State Office. Certificates of Participation will be developed for individual allotments as requested by permittees.

At the time of application, the landowner will identify any BLM lands for which he/she holds a federal grazing permit and would like to obtain a Certification of Participation for the BLM CCA. Once the CMs have been identified within a CCA application, the BLM State Office representative will begin working with the Field Office Manager—who is responsible for administering the grazing permit(s)—to develop CMs relevant to the specific allotments.

BLM CCAs and associated CMs will be implemented on a voluntary basis in keeping with the CCAA/CCA as a voluntary conservation tool administered by the Service to help prevent the need to list species under the Endangered Species Act.

Ranchland CCAA Conservation Measures Listed and Explained

In addition to fragmentation, there are 17 additional identified threats, which may occur on private ranchlands in Wyoming. In this issue, 6 of the 17 threats are listed with the corresponding CMs to provide interested landowners an idea of what threats may be present and how to address them should they incorporate a CCAA on their property.

1. **Threat:** Infrastructure (e.g. power lines, roads, fences) can fragment sage-grouse habitat.
CM: Convert electrically powered pumps or wind mills to solar; plan to avoid building infrastructure within 0.6 miles of occupied leks and within sage-grouse habitats; if feasible, bury new and existing power lines.
2. **Threat:** Disturbed, degraded or fragmented sage-grouse habitat not restored or reclaimed, results in a loss of sage-grouse habitat.
CM: Implement restoration projects in areas with known issues/concerns; rest newly seeded/planted rangeland from livestock grazing; work with agencies to include provisions for successful interim reclamation and complete restorations of habitats resulting from development and/or surface disturbing activities.
3. **Threat:** Establishment of plant communities not providing suitable habitat (e.g. monocultures of non-natives such as crested wheatgrass) reduces sage-grouse habitat quality and quantity.
CM: Do not introduce non-natives; work to remove the non-native vegetation, interseed range with native seed mixes.
4. **Threat:** Establishment of invasive plant species (including post wildland fire) reduces sage-grouse habitat quality and quantity.
CM: Participate in weed-control groups such as Cooperative Weed Management Areas or Coordinate Resource Management (CRM); work with management agencies or Weed and Pest Districts to identify areas with invasives and work to control them; rest newly seeded/planted rangeland from livestock grazing; work with a specialist to address post-wildland fire; work with a specialist to address and prevent wildland fires.
5. **Threat:** Some grazing management practices alter shrub, grass and forb composition, reducing sage-grouse habitat quality and quantity.
CM: Work with agency specialist to inventory vegetation and compare to Ecological Site Description; within 12 months, work with participating agencies to develop and implement a written conservation management plan, within 18 months, develop and implement a written grazing management plan.
6. **Threat:** Concentration of livestock (e.g. including stock tank placement) may impact vegetation and soil structure resulting in a reduction of sage-grouse habitat quality and quantity.
CM: Avoid (or rotationally utilize) nesting and brood rearing habitat as a location for activities concentrating livestock; place salt or mineral supplements in sites to minimize impacts to sage-grouse habitats; avoid placing salt or supplements within 0.25 mile of riparian habitats; fence riparian habitats (consult agency specialist) if necessary, to protect from trampling or implement a grazing strategy.

Basic Steps in Development of Umbrella CCAA

